

## He Was Born to Live

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**Luke 2:22-40** <sup>22</sup> Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present *Him* to the Lord <sup>23</sup> (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the LORD<sup>1</sup>"), <sup>24</sup> and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, "A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons<sup>1</sup>." <sup>25</sup> And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name *was* Simeon, and this man *was* just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. <sup>26</sup> And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. <sup>27</sup> So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, <sup>28</sup> he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: <sup>29</sup> "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; <sup>30</sup> For my eyes have seen Your salvation <sup>31</sup> Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, <sup>32</sup> A light to *bring* revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel." <sup>33</sup> And Joseph and His mother<sup>1</sup> marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. <sup>34</sup> Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this *Child* is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against <sup>35</sup> "(yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." <sup>36</sup> Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; <sup>37</sup> and this woman *was* a widow of about eighty-four years<sup>1</sup>, who did not depart from the temple, but served *God* with fastings and prayers night and day. <sup>38</sup> And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord<sup>1</sup>, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem. <sup>39</sup> So when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their *own* city, Nazareth. <sup>40</sup> And the Child grew and became strong in spirit<sup>1</sup>, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

What is the easiest and quickest way to get your homework done? Answer: trick your parents or teachers into doing it for you. Here's a tip for any students. Ask your parents for help when they are busy or tired and they are more likely to just give you the answer, rather than try to help you figure it out on your own.

Jesus did our homework for us. Not because he was too tired or busy but because he knew that we couldn't do it. Our church sign out there reminds us that Jesus came to die. That's true and it is always important to look beyond Christmas to the cross and why Jesus came. Namely to die for our sins. It is just as important that he also came to live. That is, he lived the perfect life and fulfilled the law in our

place. He did our homework for us. He lived the perfect life that we were supposed to live. He fulfilled the law.

We will see this later in Luke 2.

**Luke 2:51 He went down with [his parents] and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them**

Philippians reminds us that he was obedient in all things.

**Philippians 2:8 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.**

He was obedient in life and in death. We often refer to this as his active and passive obedience.

When you are active you are doing something. Jesus actively fulfilled the law doing all the things we were supposed to do. He perfectly worshiped God. He perfectly obeyed his parents. He perfectly loved his neighbors. This was his active obedience.

When you are passive, something is done to you. The Roman soldiers beat him, whipped him, and crucified him. He willingly accepted and went through with this for us. This was his passive obedience.

Passive and active obedience together means that we are saved. He died in our place and lived fulfilling the law in our place.

It is the beginning of that active obedience, that fulfilling of the law that we see in our text this morning.

**22 Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord**

There are two Old Testament religious regulations that are alluded to here. The first is the purification of Mary and the second the redemption of the firstborn.

In the Old Testament, bleeding made a person ceremonial unclean. This was a reminder that the cost of our sin was death. Childbirth in particular made a woman unclean because God had specifically cursed childbirth after Adam and Eve ate the fruit. Thus, everywoman who gave birth was unclean for forty days after birth. Any time after the forty days the woman could be purified with an offering at the temple. This offering was preferably a lamb, but God allowed the poor to give two birds instead, pigeons or turtle doves.

The fact that Mary and Joseph offered two birds instead of a lamb shows that they were very poor, and that the wisemen had not yet visited them.

Through this sacrifice the stigma of blood representing sin was removed, just as our sin would be removed by the sacrifice of Christ the Lamb of God.

The second ceremonial obligation Luke speaks about in our text was the redemption of the firstborn.

In Egypt God had passed over the houses of the Israelites during the tenth plague in Egypt and their firstborns were not killed. God, therefore, told the Israelites that all firstborns belonged to him, but that they could be redeemed, that is bought back. In this way God reminded the people of Israel what he did for them in Egypt, so that they would not forget his wonderful grace, mercy, and power.

This redemption ceremony could be done anytime thirty days after the birth. All that the Lord required in his word is that they pay five shekels to the temple. However, it also usually involved a bit more. The child would be presented to a priest who would typically give two blessings. The first was a blessing of redemption and the second was a blessing of thanksgiving.

You see this custom reflected in our text. Jesus is presented not to the priest but to the Lord. The Lord gives a double benediction through Simeon and Anna.

Simeon gives the benediction of redemption. Not, however, the redemption of Jesus, but instead the redemption of all people, especially Simeon himself, through Jesus. Through Jesus the typical redemption blessings has been turned around. Rather than receiving redemption, Jesus gives redemption.

Anna gives a benediction of thanksgiving. But once again the direction of the benediction is reversed. The thanksgiving is not given to Jesus but to all people about Jesus.

Jesus fulfilled the law, and the result of that fulfillment is not received by Jesus but given to all.

Thus, it was that Jesus, from the moment of his birth, fulfilled all that God required in his law in our place. Joseph and Mary on behalf of the whole human race, redeemed, bought back the first born of God. He was bought from God so that he could stand in our place to redeem us.

The redemption of the firstborn was both a reminder of what God had done for the people in Israel, but also a picture of Christ the firstborn of God who would be bought from God to stand in our place.

Because Jesus fulfilled the law, the Old Testament ceremonial law was at an end. It had served its purpose and was no longer needed.

There are points of major importance in our lives. Birth, Graduation, and Marriage are the three big ones but there are others. We wait with eager anticipation for these events. Not only do we wait but our parents often wait as well. We are so happy and yet we are also so sad to come to these days. They are great and important, but they also mark a great change. The old has passed away, the new has come. These dates are often bittersweet. Something new and great has come, but something old and loved is passing away.

The first part of Luke is the joyful good news, Jesus has come. The angels announce it with joy and singing. Now in a sense we have the sadder side, with the coming of the new, the old is passing away. It's a good thing but there is a sadness to it as well.

Simeon and Anna stand as representatives of the OT people. In a sense they are the old which was passing away. Yet, their reaction is not bitterness but joy. They know their time and the time of their fathers has come to an end. They also know this is a good thing.

Simeon receives the Christ child in his arms and confesses himself ready to depart. Simeon represents all the Old Testament ceremonies and regulations which were in place waiting for the coming of Christ. All the prophets and priests who waited with eager expectation for the fulfillment of the promise. The firstborn is here now. They can all depart in peace. With the coming of Christ, they have been fulfilled and are no longer necessary. Like Simeon they are ready to depart. Simeon and through him all the prophets have been waiting for this event. They do not need to wait anymore. They can rest in peace.

When we first meet Anna, she "did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day." After seeing the Lord Anna, "gave thanks and spoke about him to all." There is a dramatic shift. The ritualistic temple service served a good purpose but now it is over. Now is the time of the proclamation of the good news.

Anna is a preview of the apostles and a fulfillment of the Old Testament prophets.

**Micah 4:2 For out of Zion the law shall go forth, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.**

With the coming of Christ, the Old Testament focus on the temple is at an end and what becomes important is leaving the temple and Jerusalem to go forth and proclaim God's word. Now is the time not of prophets and priests, but of angels and shepherds and apostles and Anna, who having seen the Lord, "make widely known" those things which they had seen.

This vast shift is a good thing, but the end of the Old is not without problems. There are some who will hold on to the past. For this reason, Jesus becomes a sign spoken against. His coming divides the people into those who were truly waiting for the Messiah, and those who insist on clinging to the past even when fulfillment has come.

The hearts of both Simeon and Anna are clearly revealed. They both eager and willingly let go of the Old Testament rituals embracing with eager joy the coming of their fulfillment in Christ. They let go not as those who hated the temple but as those who truly understood its real meaning.

Christ has fulfilled the law and brought it to an end. We no longer serve the temple rituals, but rather filled with the joy of Christ we are like Simeon are ready to depart, and like Ann eager to share this good news to all. Amen